



## **Wildfire Season Briefing**

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Wednesday, April 2, 2014, 10 a.m.

Emergency Operations Center, 5656 E. McDowell

**Good morning, everyone.**

**I'm glad you could join us today to address a very serious issue.**

**As you well know, wildfire season is already under way ... and Arizona is no stranger to its damaging – and sometimes deadly – effects.**

**Particularly in these coming months, it is imperative that we take all practical and necessary measures to prevent them.**

**I have proclaimed this week – March 30<sup>th</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup> – as Arizona Wildfire Prevention Week to promote awareness of**

**Arizona's significant wildfire threat and encourage prevention efforts.**

**Everyone in Arizona knows well -- especially after last year's tragedy -- just how destructive and dangerous wildfires can be.**

**That is precisely why we must do everything possible to prevent and combat wildfires in our state.**

**The truth is that most fires in Arizona are started not by lightning strikes -- but by people ... People that are simply being careless.**

**In fact, we've already had 167 wildfires this year -- all of them were human caused ... all of them were preventable.**

**The wildfire threat is even more intense this year, given the continuing drought that has left most of Arizona arid and prone to fire damage.**

**Many fires can be avoided simply by using common sense safety practices – like remembering to put out campfires thoroughly.**

**But in a state where forest fires are nearly inevitable, being vigilant about personal responsibility often isn't enough.**

**As with every year, our team of local, state and federal entities have been preparing diligently for this wildfire season.**

**After reviewing and approving our 2014 wildfire season preparedness request by State Forester Scott Hunt, I am confident that Arizona stands ready for any call to action to keep our communities safe.**

**This gives him the necessary resources to respond to fires swiftly and effectively -- before they threaten our neighbors and our communities.**

**These resources include:**

- **Air tankers, surveillance planes, and helicopters ... including one from the Arizona National Guard and another from the Department of Public Safety;**
- **Wildland fire patrol engines;**
- **And our own very effective inmate crews.**

**Other preparedness projects to protect our forests and communities are also under way.**

**Our efforts in working with the U.S. Forest Service to support the nation's largest restoration project -- Four FRI – will thin about 1 million acres of Arizona's Ponderosa forests over the next 20 years.**

**I am very happy to report that my State Forester's Office is now working 41 separate forest- and brush-thinning projects targeted to reduce community fire threats on over 10,000 acres of Arizona lands.**

**Moreover, my 2015 budget will appropriate \$1.4 million dollars to accelerate this prevention treatment for our high-risk lands.**

**Let there be no doubt: We are making progress.**

**But it's going to take years to meet the full needs of wildfire suppression and forest health restoration.**

**Still, citizens need to do their part to defend their households from the risk of fire.**

**It is critical that residents in vulnerable areas learn about the Arizona State Forestry Division's Firewise Communities program.**

**This helps communities create defensible zones around property to reduce danger and damage.**

**Since last summer, our State Forester's Office has trained and certified over 150 fire officials and others to help with Firewise treatments across Arizona.**

**I encourage you to learn about the program that is detailed on the Arizona State Forestry website.**

**So, this fire season, I ask all Arizonans to pay attention to all fires and flames ... and make sure anything that could start a fire is totally extinguished.**

**We must all do everything in our power to protect our loved ones, including our brave firefighters. We cannot thank these hard-working, heroic men and women enough.**

**Now, I'm pleased to be on hand to officially present two wildland fire trucks that will help rural Arizona fire districts fight these blazes.**

**These trucks come to us from a cooperative program between our State Forester and the Cooperative Federal Excess Property Program through the U.S. Forest Service.**

**It has provided over 80 fire engines and water tender trucks in rural Arizona, where they're most needed.**

**I invite State Forester Scott Hunt to come up here, along with Black Canyon Fire District Chief Tom Birch from Yavapai County, and Fire Chief Al Gameros from the Globe Fire Department in Gila County to accept the keys.**

**Thank you again for joining us today ... and for spreading the message of caution and care in Arizona's forests.**

**Now I'm going ask Scott to talk briefly about wildfire conditions we expect this spring and summer.**

**Thank you.**